

KSU PLAN TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON THE PRAXIS II EXAM

**Agenda Item E-3
June 25, 2001**

The Committee on Equal Opportunities should ask Kentucky State University to revise and re-submit its plan of action to improve the teacher education program to include information that is missing. Two key elements of the CEO's request were not addressed by KSU. The two elements are programmatic improvements identified during their consultation with UK, UofL, and CPE that will be implemented to improve the teacher education program; and how KSU will evaluate program efficiency and student success.

Commitment (A.2.d) of the Partnership Agreement with the OCR outlines an agreement by KSU to work with UK, UofL, and CPE to enhance and strengthen their education program. KSU further agreed to substantially narrow the gap between the performance rate of its students on the PRAXIS II exam as compared to the Kentucky statewide performance average, and if in any given year the students' performance rate declined, KSU would evaluate the education program and provide a plan for improvement.

Two responses to the CEO request were submitted by KSU. The first report, provided by Dr. Ken Eke, Vice President for Academic Affairs, seeks to justify the poor performance of students by offering explanations for their deficiencies. Also, the report introduced strategies that have been implemented as well as initiatives that are planned for the upcoming calendar year. The report did not include a description of the evaluation process. The second report, provided by Dr. Kenneth Chatman, Vice President for Student Services, offers substantially more information about past actions to improve teacher education, current improvements, and new activities and initiatives that are planned. However, the report by Dr. Chatman considers concerns about the teacher education program to be "perceived problems including the PRAXIS II exam."

Both reports document past actions, current strategies, and future activities but are incomplete because they fail to identify specific systematic strategies necessary to increase student exam scores and the mechanisms that will be used to assess program and student success. Significant opportunities were afforded faculty and administrators to attend workshops and training. However, the reports fail to establish how the newly acquired information might contribute to the success of students taking the PRAXIS II exam. The plan does not identify the "best practices" discussed by representatives from UK, UofL, or CPE nor does it offer a description of how these practices may be used to enhance program efficiency or student performance. Furthermore, KSU implemented a new policy requiring all students to take the PRAXIS II exam before they are allowed to do their student teaching, but did not relate the relevance of the policy to the increase in students' performance rates. The reports show that the university is making efforts to address concerns about its teacher education program. However, important implementation strategies are omitted. (See the attached reports.)